(4)

GOOD NEWES
From the Assembly in Scotland, now sitting in consultation, concerning their Ecclesiasticall Government in the CHURCH.

Exhibited to this Parliament in *England*, concerning this present Reformation in *England*, with their heartie desires this ensuing Treatise may be forthwith enacted; for the satisfaction of all good Subjects, here or elsewhere.

From *Edenburgh*, August 4. 1642.

London printed for *Jo. Watson*. 1642.

CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Good Newes from the Assembly in *Scotland*, now sitting in consultation, concerning their Ecclesiasticall Government.

THe Confession of Faith, and Reformation of the Kirk of Scotland, in doctrine, discipline, and worship, so far as the Reformers did conceive and understand were regulated by the word of God, & grounded upon Scripture, as is acknowledged by the Harmony of Confessions of the Reformed Kirks, and by the testimony of the best and most eminent Divines, which have been in the Kirk of England, or in the Reformed Kirks at that time, and to this day, amidst the greatest desolation, notwithstanding the ambition and usurpation of Prelates, no other Ministers and Office-bearers have been acknowledged, or received by the Reformed Kirk of Scotland, but Pastours, Doctours, and Elders, with Deacons. These

being warranted with Scripture, and being sufficient for all the necessarie uses of the Kirk of Scotland; yet so, that the Prince and Civill Magistrate, hold his owne eminent place and Civill Power, for the conservation and purgation of Religion.

No man here were, were he never so wise and pious above others, or doth he never so much abrogate authoritie unto himselfe, hath the reines of Kirk government in his hands, to dispose or doe what seemeth good in his owne eyes; but all matters are advised and determined by Common Consent in the Conventions and Assemblies of the Kirk; which Assemblies were of foure sorts and degrees, commonly designed by the names of Kirk-Sessions, or Consistories, Presbyteries, Provinciall Synods, and Generall, or Nationall Assemblies.

The Kirk-Sessions, or Consistorie, doe consist of one Minister at least, approved for his learning, life, and skill in government; and of Elders, men of best knowledge, and holiest of life in the parish, so many in number as the proportion of the Congregation doth require, who are chosen with the consent of the people, and in the presence of the people solemnly admitted to their charge: These convene weekly for ordering such matters of the worship of God, as are proper for that parish; as what dayes of the week are meetest for assembling to the publike worship, or catechizing; and what houres in the Lords day, before noone and after noone, are fittest for the exercise of that day, at what times the Communion shall be given, for consulting of Delinquents in swearing, cursing, profana-

profanation of the Lords day, drunkenneſſe, fornication: And for dilating greater offences, ſuch as hereſie, ſuperſtition, adulterie, if any be ſuſpected: if there be any ſcandall within their bounds, that all Trangreſſours may be brought to repentance, or ſeparated from the people of God, according to the Ordinances of Chriſt, and order of the Kirk. Here alſo the Deacons are preſent, to receive direction in their dutie.

Preſbytery or Claſſicall meeting doth conſiſt of particular Kirks, in ſuch a circuit 12, 16, or 20. Or ſo many, as by conveniencie of the place, can weekly aſſemble here, one elder of each pariſh appointed by the particular Kirk-Seſſion, and the whole Miniſters of theſe, doe meet where the Miniſters and others bee admitted to the Miniſtry, whom we call expectance, exerciſe their gifts by courſe in publike, the exerciſed or propheſie being ended, the Miniſter and Elders ſit downe, and after prayer and cenſure of the Doctrine, they uſe the power of Juriſdiction, Ordination, Suſpenſation, Deprivation, Viſitation of Kirks, tryals of the projects of Excommunication, deduced by the particular elderſhips and of direction to the Miniſters of the pariſh, to excommunicate if need be. Here the Scandalous faults of Miniſters in Doctrine or life, are declared, and all perſons of whatſoever qualitie diſobedient to their owne Miniſters and Elders, are with great authority cenſured. Provinciall Synods doe conſiſt of the whole Preſbyteryes, ſhires, or provinces, ſo that the whole Kingdome is divided into Shires or Provinces in relation to thoſe Synods. Here all the Miniſters and one Elder from every pariſh doe meet

twice in the yeare, and after preaching and calling upon the name of God by the Moderators of the preceding Synode; a new Moderator being choſen, they trie the Presbyteries by their Records, presented by the Clerk of every Presbyterie what was obscure or difficult for the Presbyteries, or might concerne them all in common, is determined and ordained, and if any difficultie doe arise which doth not fall under some Kirk constitution, it is referred to the National Assemblie: all matters are with such deligence, expedited that each Minister may returne to his charge on the Lords day.

In the generall or nationall assembly, the Kings Majesty in person, or Commissioner in his place useth to be present, who convene once in the yeare or oftener, *pro re nata*.

It doth consist of Ministers and Elders from each Presbytery and regall Burrough.

After solemne Humiliation the first day of the Assembly, one of the Ministers is choſen by the voyces of the whole Assembly to moderate and precide in that Assembly.

The records of the Synode, are perused and tryed, Acts and constitutions of all the Churches, and agreed upon with common consent, and all mens doubts and scruples concerning them, are satisfied to the full. If they be propounded *Animo edificandi non tentandi*, Appellations, Grievances, Petitions and Complaints, are examined and determined by this supreme and highest Kirks Iudicatory, and some Commissioners choſen to present grievances or Petitions agreed upon

in

in the Assembly to the Parliament, the King, the Councell of the Kingdome, or convention of the Estates.

In this authority subordination of Sessions, Presbyteryes, provinciall Synodes and nationall Assemblies doe consist, the Order, Beauty, the strength of the Kirks of *Scotland*, comfortable to the Godly, both pastors and professors, terrible as an Army with Banners to Papists, be their places never so high, to all Hereticks, Schismaticks, hirelings and all ungodly men.

No scandalous fault of any person escapeth Censure.

No heresie or errors can sooner be hatched, but it is presently crushed by some of those inferiour Assemblies, or if it be kept on foot, or take strength, it is quite suppressed by the nationall Assembly convening once in a yeare, which hath beene a mayne cause why so few sects and errors in Doctrine and Worship have appeared in the Kirk of *Scots* for many yeares, and whereſoever those Assemblies have place and liberty, the names of Heresies and Sects have not almost been heard of.

In these particular Assemblies, the particular Hereticks are not governed by the extrinsecall power of any one or many set over them, as in the Monarchicall government of prelates, but they are ruled and judged by themselves, and their owne intrinsecall power, each member by the whole body in one orderly way. None of the whole communion of the faithfull being barred from the joynt and common governm ent by those

Assemblies

Assemblies, the gifts, the knowledge and zeale of all the members, especially of the Ministers, and stirred up, quickened and strengthened, and holy emulation is excited by acquaintance, conference, and by perceiving the gifts one of another. And the best gifts are known for planting of Kirks and Colledges: whence it is that Ministers returne from those Assemblies ashamed and humbled in themselves, and furnished with fresh resolutions for every pastorall duty for the common benefit and edification of all the Kirks.

FINIS